

# Opening the tap on digital innovation.



**CONNECT<sup>®</sup>**

**NWG**  
*living water*

# Overview.

Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) is on track to achieve its aim of becoming the UK's leading water company. Now, with the Genesys Cloud CX® platform, bots triage contacts and route customers to the right advisor the first time. Employees blend calls with web messaging, Facebook and WhatsApp messages, starting conversations off the right way – guided by accurate data and knowledge articles. Since completing the first phase of its digital transformation, NWL has been ranked number one for "customer measure of experience" (C-MeX) by its regulator, Ofwat – aided by a range of KPI improvements.

Customer	Northumbrian Water Limited
Industry	Utilities in the UK
Solution	Genesys Cloud CX
Company size	3000 employees
Contact Center	Around 600 users
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handling spiking call volumes with disparate systems</li><li>• Inability to deflect through digital channels and automation</li><li>• Poor reporting and visibility into key metrics</li></ul>

Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) operates in the northeast of England, where it's known as Northumbrian Water, and in the southeast of England, where it's known as Essex and Suffolk Water. With a workforce nearly 3,000 strong, NWL serves about 4.4 million customers – supplying more than 290 million gallons of water a day. It also manages sewage services while addressing serious environmental issues like leakage reduction, public health, and the cleanliness of rivers and other waterways.

"Our senior leadership team trusted us to get the basics right and then innovate using an agile, iterative approach. In turn, those service improvements have contributed towards NWL earning top spot in the latest Ofwat C-MeX scores."

David Halliday, IS Product Manager  
Northumbrian Water Limited

Aiming to become the UK's leading water company, NWL is passionate about service and putting customers first. It's monitored by the regulator Ofwat, which measures its own unique version of customer experience, "customer measure of experience" (C-MeX) that offers a valuable source of income and reputational benefits. Integral to the success of NWL are an experienced pool of advisors working from home and onsite at billing and operational contact centres in Durham, Lowestoft, Washington and Hanningfield.

NWL has come a long way in a short time. Trying to build relationships was difficult with customers only tending to get in touch for one-off events like water leaks, billing disputes, bereavements or house moves.

"Service mostly took place over the phone," said David Halliday, IS Product Manager at NWL. "Every March we'd see call volumes spike by as much as 30% from our unmetered customers querying their estimated bills. However, we had no way of deflecting calls through digital channels. Instead, we were forced to spend time and money managing disparate on-premises systems, leaving no headroom for innovation."

Working closely with its trusted partner, Connect, NWL set about transforming its experience and moving to the cloud. "We wanted new channels like WhatsApp, Facebook and digital assistants, making it easier for customers to get the help they needed," added Halliday. "Consolidating on a single cloud platform also removed significant risk and expense."



# The business need.

Already familiar with its existing Genesys Engage™ on-premises solution, NWL saw several advantages in evolving to the Genesys Cloud CX platform. As well as being easy to use, it was ideal for remote working and quick to deploy out of the box. "Other solutions we looked at required more building on our end," said Halliday. "We saw Genesys Cloud CX as a market leader and a platform that we could innovate on. It's also intuitive and easy for our teams to learn."

"R&D was an important factor, and we could see there was a strong product development roadmap with weekly releases," added Judith Rutherford, IS Vendor Manager at NWL. "Now, through the Genesys portal we get to feed ideas and watch them come to fruition. And, through flexible licensing, we were able to extend benefits to other parts of the business."

Implemented by Connect specialists, the entire cloud platform was live within six months - the same amount of time it took NWL to integrate a single chat solution with its previous infrastructure. The cutover from Genesys Engage to Genesys Cloud CX took about an hour and went smoothly with no impact to customers.

"Connect have highly skilled experts who understand our business and know the Genesys platform inside-out," added Halliday. "With such a dispersed workforce, we focused heavily on change management, supported by a massive company-wide communications and training exercise."



# The solution.

NWL has elevated its customer and employee experience through new digital channels and automation. "Our senior leadership team trusted us to get the basics right and then innovate quickly using an agile, iterative approach," said Halliday. "The benefits from those service improvements have contributed to NWL earning the top spot in the latest Ofwat C-MeX scores."

Genesys supports 600 users, not just working in the company's contact and operational centres, but also across business functions such as billing, IT and other back-office teams.

A simple example is sending customers an SMS message to schedule a meter installation visit. "SMS messaging has significantly improved response rates," added Halliday. "It's also more convenient for the customer and a more efficient

way to work, compared to repeatedly placing calls that might go unanswered. As a result, we're now able to complete more appointment bookings through reduced appointment handling."

NWL seamlessly blends calls and texts with Genesys Web Messaging, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp conversations, guided by real-time data and knowledge articles automatically surfaced by the system.

The move toward digital channels has also helped the NWL team work more efficiently and reduce costs. Genesys chatbots now help triage customers to the right agent, which has reduced touchpoints and customer effort. "Within two weeks, we saw an 89% fall in the transfer rate after and a six-point rise in customer satisfaction," added Halliday.

In less than six months, NWL completely overhauled Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and web messaging with chatbots skillfully steering customers to the right agent the first time to discuss issues like leaks, billing queries, bereavements and house moves.

"If we had to alert 20,000 properties of a flood or water supply outage, it could take over an hour, while advisors continued receiving calls from worried customers. Now, we can send 6,000 texts per minute, bringing overall response time down to just over three minutes."

Judith Rutherford, IS Vendor Manager  
Northumbrian Water Limited

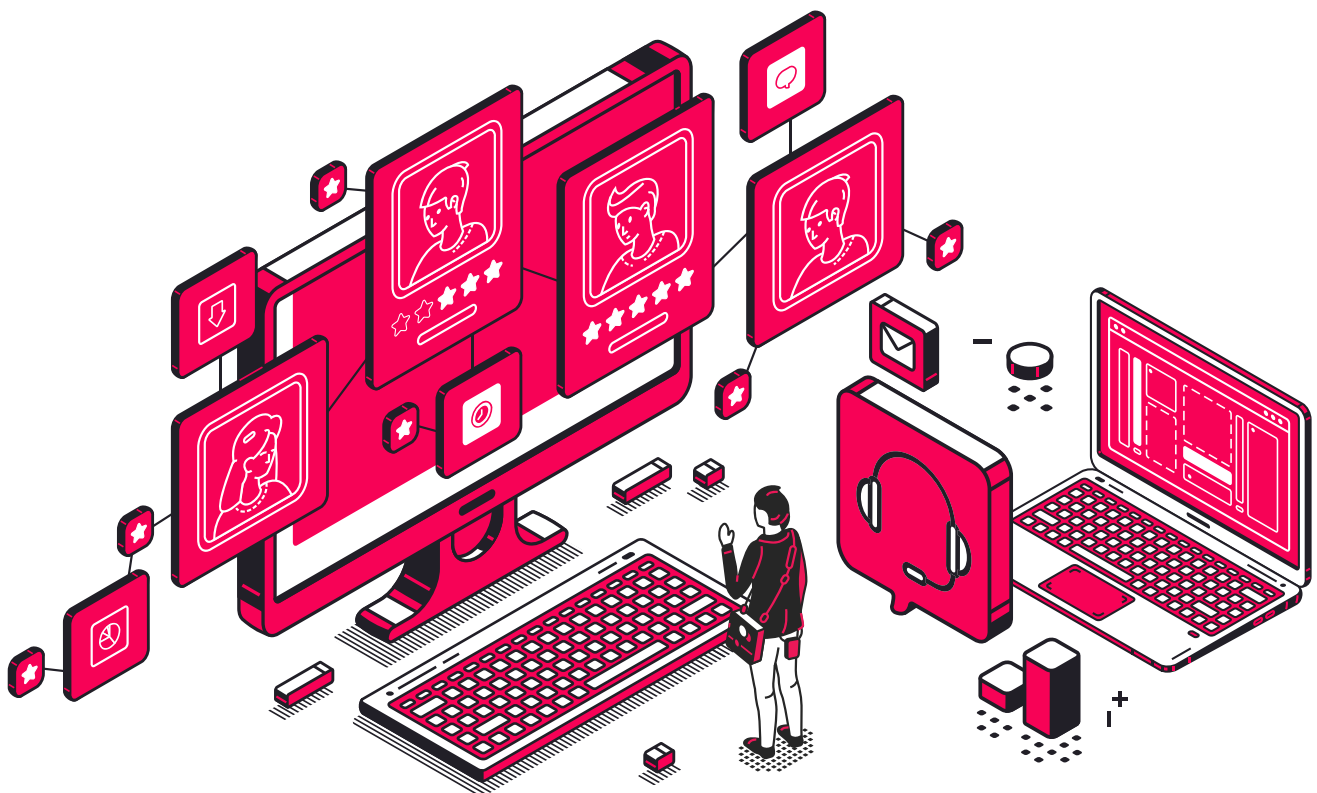


"Before, we had to manually triage and push every interaction to the right queue," said Halliday. "And the advisor would go back and forth asking the customer to confirm information. We're now able to help customers so much faster. And, by providing knowledge articles at the point of contact, encourage use of our self-service channels."

Managing email using Genesys Cloud CX means advisors don't have to constantly remember to check Outlook accounts for time-critical requests. "Some emails, like alerts to potential water pollution incidents, require a two-hour response," said Rutherford. "We're now able to manage that risk more effectively by routing high-priority emails straight to an advisor, or to our 24-hour operations centre at night." In addition, NWL will shortly be launching email campaigns to start fresh conversations with customers who have unlisted mobile numbers.

Outbound messaging campaigns are more efficient as well. With its previous SMS solution, NWL was limited to sending 300 text messages per minute. "If we had to alert 20,000 properties of a flood or water supply outage, it could take over an hour, while advisors continued receiving calls from worried customers," added Rutherford. "Now, we can send 6,000 texts per minute, bringing overall response time down to just over three minutes."

Other results include a halving of ASA and a 10% reduction in AHT across digital channels. Key data, such as ASA for social channels that used to be buried in spreadsheets, is instantly available. NWL also has better uptime than it did with its on-premises solution.



# Outcome.

The difference since upgrading to Genesys Workforce Engagement Management has been noticeable as well.

Quality evaluations align more closely with coaching and development plans. In addition, it's much easier to activate and de-activate skills when assigning agents to voice and digital queues.

No longer tied to standard templates, managers simply tick filters to customise reports and drill deep into information such as adherence data, which never existed before. "Other systems could take 20 minutes to generate a forecast, whereas Genesys artificial intelligence-driven forecasting is very quick," said Steven Johnson, Workforce Optimisation Manager at NWL. "Similarly, it's eliminated the need to constantly export data into spreadsheets."

With policy-based automation, all calls are recorded and screened to identify topics using speech and text analytics. "Using keyword searches, we're able to identify potentially vulnerable customers who might not be registered for priority services, or situations that require more understanding if discussing issues like credit score ratings," said Johnson.

Meanwhile, gamification helps to keep advisors motivated and engaged. "We're trialing gamification at present and, although it's still early days, introducing leaderboards and medal tables certainly makes work more interesting and fun," added Johnson.

One of the biggest wins for NWL has been the shift of managing a cloud-based platform rather than an on-premises solution. "We've seen a reduction in internal support and just working to keep the lights on," said Halliday. "On our calls with Connect, we talk more about new capabilities coming instead of support tickets."

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NWL is working on several new initiatives. It plans to fully deploy Genesys quality management and leverage Agent Assist to reduce aftercall work through automatic call summarisation powered by Genesys AI.

"The water sector is very risk-averse, and rightly so in some key areas, but there are other parts of our business where we're learning to take more risks through trying new approaches," concluded Nigel Watson, CIO at NWL. "We'll analyse what went well, what didn't go well, and constantly improve and innovate. This approach helps us progress and has delivered great results."



**Ranked  
No. 1**

for C-MeX



**5-8.5% rise**

in customer satisfaction



**50%  
decrease**

in average speed of  
answer (ASA)



**10%  
reduction**

in average handle time  
(AHT)



**89%  
decrease**

in call transfers



**20X  
increase**

in SMS capabilities

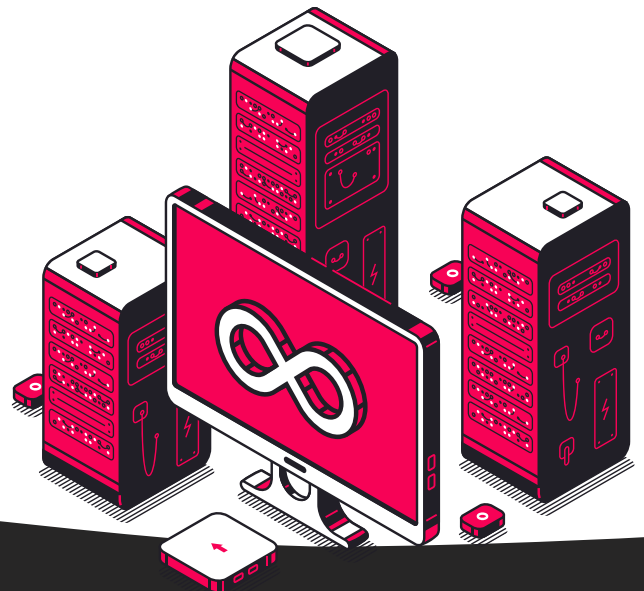


# About us.

## About Connect


We're Connect, a global business communications expert with over 30 years' experience. We have a clear and simple purpose; to help people communicate better. We make this happen by powering frictionless journeys and providing secure networks that benefit organisations, their people and their customers, building towards a brighter, more sustainable future for all three.

By leveraging our expertise in CX and automation, we orchestrate connected experiences. And while we are trusted by many technology vendors, we're independent of all of them, enabling us to make the complex simple.



## Connect with us.

To discuss a communications challenge or find out more about our capabilities, get in touch with us today.

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